

Weekly Wire

January 28, 2013

News from East Asia and Pacific

Australia

Study shows gene flow from India to Australia more than 4000 years ago

A research team from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology analyzed genetic variation from aboriginal Australians, New Guineans, island Southeast Asians, and Indians. The findings suggest substantial gene flow from India to Australia 4,230 years ago. The study found a common origin for populations in Australia, New Guinea and the Mamanwa (a Negrito group from the Philippines) and estimated these groups split from each other about 36,000 years ago.

<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/study-shows-gene-flow-from-india-to-australia-4000-years-ago-20130115-2cqqp.html#ixzz2I12Qsncl>

Japan

Economic Stimulus Package

The new Japanese Government approved an economic stimulus package that includes an S&T supplemental budget of Yen 994.9 billion (\$11 billion). With this huge infusion, Japan's FY2012 (Apr 1, 2012-Mar 31, 2013) S&T budget reached a record of Yen 5,126.8 billion (\$57 billion). The supplemental S&T budget will be invested in a wide range of S&T programs, including stem-cell research, the SPring-8 synchrotron facility, space and deep-sea research, supercomputer K, and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). Of further note is the investment of Yen 180 billion (\$2 billion) to encourage university cooperation with industry to promote commercialization of technologies.

<http://www.nature.com/news/japan-s-stimulus-package-shows-science-with-cash-1.12270>

On-Demand Synaptic Electronics

Synaptic devices that mimic the learning and memory processes in living organisms are attracting avid interest as an alternative to standard computing elements that may help extend Moore's law beyond current physical limits.

However, artificial synaptic systems thus far have been hampered by complex fabrication requirements and limitations in the learning and memory functions they mimic. Researchers at the National Institute for Materials Science in Japan and the University of California, Los Angeles have developed nanoionic devices capable of a broad range of neuromorphic and electrical functions.

<http://www.nims.go.jp/mana/research/highlight/vol4/index.html>

Malaysia

Selangor Campus for Xiamen University

Xiamen University's first overseas campus will be built in Selangor (Peninsular Malaysia), making it one of the few Chinese universities to have a campus abroad. The RM600 million (\$197 million) campus on a 61ha site in Salak Tinggi will include engineering, business, and Chinese language and literature faculties. Classes will begin in September 2015.

Prime Minister Najib Razak said it was a “historic moment” for Malaysia-China ties. He added that the university was hoping to attract 10,000 students, with a third coming from Malaysia, a third from China and the rest from elsewhere.

<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/219556>

Singapore

Yale-National University of Singapore will open August 2013

The Straits Times reported last month that Yale-NUS, the new college being set up in partnership between Yale and the National University of Singapore, received 2,600 applications in the first two rounds of its admissions exercise. There are only 150 slots for the school’s inaugural cohort. Yale-NUS will open its doors for the first time in August of this year.

The Yale-NUS tie-up has attracted controversy and debate in the US. Last month, the American Association of University Professors issued an open letter expressing concern about academic and personal freedom at the college.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/breaking-news/singapore/story/yale-nus-starts-new-round-admissions-20121217>

<http://www.aaup.org/news/2012/open-letter-aaup-yale-community>